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JOSEPH GRÜNPECK AND HIS NEAT TREATISE (1496) ON THE FRENCH EVIL *

A TRANSLATION WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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INTRODUCTION

AMONG the first writers on the topic of syphilis, Joseph Grünpeck von Burckhausen¹ is inevitably cited as outstanding. He is given a prominent position in Fuchs'² collection of early literature on syphilis, and his tractate is reproduced in facsimile in Sigerist's³ volume, "Monumenta Medica III." In spite of this recognition, his original work is neglected although references and allusions to it are frequent. While most summaries on any topic in the literature of syphilis would not be regarded as complete without mention of his name, his earnest and archaic words are not conveniently located, and at the present time his writings are not easily accessible to a student of the history of medicine. On account of this, it has seemed worth while to review his tractate and to translate it, using as a source the German edition that Fuchs preferred and republished.

It is interesting to note how little of this tractate actually has to do with the subject of syphilis. There are, in fact, very few allusions to symptomatology, and the total verbiage dealing with contagion, spread, symptomatology, and treatment does not amount to more than 500 words. One is struck forcibly, on reading Grünpeck's work, by the fact that the many references to him in the literature have been made as a matter of habit rather than because of the scientific importance of the contribution. It is also of some importance to realise that Grünpeck was not a physician, nor had he at the

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time his tractate was written, had much personal experience with the disease or opportunity or reason for thorough investigation of it. Grünpeck's tractate is of considerable interest, however, because it is a personal document written by a very intelligent person who was alive at the time syphilis spread as an epidemic over Europe, and flourished in an apparently more virulent form than it has to-day. Grünpeck's work also depicts the clouded atmosphere surrounding medical subjects as other scientific matters at the end of the fifteenth century and in the early part of the Renaissance period. Of the ten brief chapters that make up this work, the first eight are devoted to a discussion of astrological explanations sprinkled with strongly religious apostrophes.

To the psychologically-minded reader, one of the main aspects of interest will be the fine example Grünpeck gives of "autistic-undisciplined thinking in Science" (Bleuler), which the first eight chapters represent. Grünpeck's self-assurance is reasoning, and the apparent completeness of the logical structure he builds up may be a warning as well as an example to the reader. In his literary style Grünpeck has a mannerism common to many writers in the period near the end of the Middle Ages, which was to mix pagan mythology and Christian dogma in a charmingly irresponsible way. However, after having devoted the first eight chapters to religious-astrological theories, apparently for the purpose of meeting the standards and scientific traditions of his period, in Chapter IX. Grünpeck suddenly changes his attitude and is metamorphosed from a religionist and astrologer into an observer of fact. His sentences in Chapter IX. contain shrewd and practical advice which he formulates with lapidary-like precision ; for example, he says, "Therefore, speaking of natural remedies, there are three : the first is flight, that every one should flee from those people who have this sickness, for it goes from one person to the other."

Regarding therapy, Grünpeck was opposed to early treatment and believed that drugs were indicated only after the disease had run its acute course. In fact, he was extremely pessimistic as to the value of drugs, and he indicates that this was the opinion of the leading physicians of his day.

In summary, and considering Grünpeck's tractate in

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its totality, it may be said that the only statements he made that can still be considered valid to-day are :—

(1) That syphilis was a wide-spread contagious disease transmitted by personal contact, especially sexual intercourse.

(2) That there was at that time no specific remedy, and

(3) That cleanliness, a good mental attitude, and generally hygienic rules of living (with special care given to the gastro-intestinal tract, food, and elimination) were advisable for patients already ill, or those who hoped to prevent the disease.

Some difficulty was met with in translating Grünpeck's tract. One problem was whether or not to preserve some of his sentences in their antiquated form and length. Clarity is difficult to achieve in a literal translation. If put in present-day scientific English it would not be like his original text. However, it was decided to make minimal changes, and only when necessary, in order to retain as much as possible of the document's quaintness and original tone.

A translation of his tractate follows :—

A NEAT TREATISE ON THE ORIGIN OF THE FRENCH EVIL WHICH IS ALSO CALLED THE WILD WARTS AND A RÉGIME BY WHICH ONE SHOULD GOVERN ONESELF DURING THIS TIME

To the Prudent, Worthy, and Wise Burgomasters of the Commendable City of Augsburg, to my Benevolent Dear Masters, I, Joseph Grünpeck Von Burckhausen, wish an Obedient, Unanimous Community, a Good Rule and Happiness, along with Government for the Good of All, etc.

To you prudent, worthy, and wise men : at a date shortly past, the Latin *Carmina*, or songs, containing songs of praise of a sort, of the highly-learned, worthy Doctor Sebastian Brannndt, have come into my hands—songs which, with great art, reason, and especial gifts of God, are artistically adorned with words, meanings, and tales, and stories intermingled. I find, among explanations of other uncurbed events of this world, that this song of praise gives notice of various plagues, diseases, and adversities, by which humans, due to the

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influence of the constellations of the higher world and regions, are now being punished by the sentence of the Almighty ruler. That terrifying, troublesome and painful sickness which our mother tongue (with your permission) calls the French Evil or the Wild Warts, is also not omitted. But since the prettily turned out and informative Carmina, or speeches and songs of praise by the above-mentioned doctor are written in Latin and reproduced widely over the world, I bring before my eyes the terribly misshapen French Evil and remember that there are many more people living who day after day are plagued by this disease who do not understand Latin than those who understand it and who are not able to be helpful or to advise themselves in the curing of this fearful disease. Therefore, as I am moved out of brotherly love and loyalty for my neighbour, to present the following in German instead of Latin ; I humbly beg with all respect and reverence to excuse me if my crude German uses many words where the Latin presents the meaning in a few. If, in this form it brings the common reading public to greater understanding and more thorough knowledge, where such is necessary, please do not hold it against me, but pardon me benevolently. I have also developed my mind in the teachings of Aristotle, who admonishes us to use not only that which has already been discovered, but also that which is being discovered ; and I tell you about this sickness, its origin, its true symptoms and causes, all prescribed hereby in my treatise, and also about other cases which are multiplying constantly in these years. Also, I tell about verified and true medicines to drive out the French Evil. I wish these medicines simply to be of use to those who are tainted by the disease and I do not want to gain any renown by naming them, and I sincerely hope that your wisdom will receive this, my work, favourably and with gladness. I am offering this, my book, as a service to the community, to the worthy City Council, and to any one in particular, which is given on the eleventh day of the month of November, in 1496.

To the great and honoured Johannes Reuchel, the imperial interpreter of justice, who is otherwise called Capinon, expert in all the subtle arts of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew letters, on the subject of the French Evil,

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which one calls the Wild Warts, the verses or Carmina of Sebastian Branndt :—

Capinon, not the least among the poets whom it is possible to name a mirror of the German nation, and a noble of the world, tell us, if you have the eyes of a lynx, how the appearance of the world and of all classes appeal to you. You must see that throughout the whole world Bellona, the Goddess of Conflict, has much work and trouble with the present great unrest, and that in many things she now and again “ plays with the ball.” * As you know, one is looking for an unknown knot on the rushes. No one is ever certain, to any degree, whether Cissura kills him by her poison, or whether Bellona, a sister of Mars, causes his end by her cannon-ball. As we know, few are faithful to the Roman Empire and it hardly pleases the French to have an emperor, and every one strives to rule himself in the blind course of the world. Every nation draws itself away from the yoke ; no time and no era before has suffered this trouble heretofore, as now we see many things upset one after the other. The frogs did not like the voice of the thunder from the clouds, therefore the stork was given to them to be king, as a punishment. Some asked for a new king, but, to the doves the bad and greedy hawk is given as a king. Just as Greece wished to take the Roman reins in hand, she was lost and suffered the hard yoke of a wicked ruler. Who has removed faith from his head (Ah me !), now suffers more harshly from the head and cruel masters. The best example is Medusa, the daughter of Phorcus, the most just sorrow of the Gods, when many were changed into stone before her visage. She, Medusa, was later killed with one blow by Perseus, who was armed with the wings and the weapons of Mercury, and the crystal shield of Pallas Athene. Out of Medusa’s blood Pegasus was born. Among many things, which I confess not to understand, there is one thing which I believe is not unknown to you : that is, that the Italians are zealously anxious to cut off the Head (Emperor) which the Germans elected. Even though the end is hard, it seems, nevertheless, that the resistance even of animals is limited. When horses are affected with sickness from eating the weed Hyppurim, which impairs their speed, just so the scepter is raised or taken

* *I.e.*, meddles or interferes.



FIG. 1.

According to Sudhoff, in *Ein habscher Tractat von dem Ursprung des Bosen Franzos* (Augsburg, December, 1496), Joseph Grünpeck made an addition to the earlier ideas on the etiology of the new disease. His book was an exposition of the supposed influences of the stars upon syphilis, which illustrates the firm possession of public interest by astrological ideas at that time. The advent of the epidemic was widely held to have been initiated by a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter. Accordingly, Grünpeck opened his work with this diagram of the Universe—naturally geocentrically represented according to the Ptolemaic concept then believed—which was especially drawn up to show the relation of the planets at the date of publication.

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from the Assyrians and the Medas and also from the Persians. Those of Lacedemonia's strong kingdom, they have fallen. Therefore now, God, who is the avenger, causes heavy sickness to come ever so often with fever and also other sicknesses, and also he lets appear many wonders of the sea and also wild monstrous animals and miraculous signs, hitherto unbeknownst in nature and bringing death to many. Who is it, who now for over seven or at least for over five years, has not been fearing a dreadful or deadly plague? Add to that more and more new diseases, growing every hour and again every day, which I will not mention, as if they were the arrows of the gods, with which wickedness becomes cleansed and chastised, and badness is driven out. Therefore the lightening is fashioned by the hands of the mighty men, known as the Cyclops, who are in the power (so it is said) of Jupiter, and through whom he has ruled mankind since the beginning of the world, and has also taught humans how to live and how to become holy. To relate about each peculiar thing, of which there is a great multitude, makes me tired, so I will keep silent. This alone is enough to think about, that now a cruel condition (about which I have a dread of speaking), also a horrible and spotting (which I pray God to turn away from us) and a death-bringing disease has been sent by France out among the Lygurians, inhabitants of the Italian country between the Partenbyrg and the river Phadt. The Roman tongue calls this the French Evil. This has attacked the Italians and after creeping over the mountains it now torments the Germans and those who live near the Danube. It also grows right in the middle of those who live in Thracia (Carinthia and Jugo-Slavia) and in Behem (Bohemia), and all Pollocks (Polacks) fear the sickness very much. Even at the end of the world, the British, who are surrounded by the ever-flowing ocean, are not sufficiently safe. The cry is, that it is coming to the Aphris and Gethis, these peoples in Thracia, and that it would destroy with its power the twin stars, which are called the poles of the earth. To speak further, the damage grows everywhere; even on our bodies one sees much disease. That which comes from France is called Scorra from the word Scor, which the Greeks call Oletum, which is much talked about as impure, pimply, or stinking. It could be called Thimius when the warts

Ein hübscher Tractat von dem vrsprung
des Bösen Franzos. das man n ennei die
Wylde wârgen. Auch ein Regiment wie
man sich regiren soll in diser zeyt.



A i.

FIG. 2.

Illustration for Grünpeck's *Ein hübscher Tractat von dem Ursprung des Bösen Franzos*, Augsburg, December, 1496. This illustration was borrowed and somewhat altered from a similar one used by Sebastian Brant in a broadsheet in verse titled, "De pestilentiali scorra sive mala de Franzos, Eulogium," published in September, 1496. In the illustration used by Grünpeck reproduced here, a crusading knight representing the Emperor Maximilian is shown in reverence on his knees before the Holy Child from whose hand beneficent and healing rays issue towards a group of sick and praying women. Separate from them, in the foreground, lies a corpse covered with marks of the disease. The central figure is the Virgin, throned and crowned. The Emperor grasps a banner exhibiting the Crusader's cross. Also in the foreground is a shield, bearing the Hapsburg eagle.

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break open and the blood comes out of them ; but when the warts are dry, it could be called Condiloma or Can-grena, which is larger than that. But tiny pocks spring up too, in a smaller number ; these are different from the pox which one calls small-pox, and this is the reason ; that in the latter there is a cold dampness, while in the former a black and broken dampness occurs which is called Melancholia. And the sickness happens just as often as Saturn, a carrier of disease, leaves his own house and enters into the house of Jupiter. Then, after that Jupiter drives out, cleans and clears up the bad things which the old hard and malignant Saturn left behind. This happens often ; namely, eight times five, that is to say every forty years—then follows on the earth such a disease as this one, especially if the bodies of people are dry. This is why it comes more often to the French or to those, whom one calls Iberians, and seldom to where there is a cold dampness. Neither Chiron nor Machaon with his brother Poladirijs, who are the best of doctors, can help the disease. Many try to give medicines and to salve the body, also sew it into a sack of skin ; but believe this : that the medicines which one uses primarily, often do harm and the pus which is driven away, becomes a hard scab. The only help is the benevolence of the higher powers and a long time, which this sickness consumes, with the help of salves which one calls Mithridates, and blood-letting, which is often done. We see that in eleven months many have fallen into a long-protracted arid state (like a dryness or a “ lean period ”), or a state that to an individual would be like a drought would be to a country and have not completely returned to their old selves. Many look upon the sickness as a lesser leprosy ; others think it belongs to the group of pestilent diseases. Many wish to die as soon as possible, so badly does the inner pus or the rotting blood hurt them. It burns, punches, and pricks them, inflames, tortures and itches with all kinds of pains and torments them. Therefore, we beg for pity from the higher powers of the heavens and go to the altars and beg God for peace. May our devout prayer reach the Virgin Mary, so that she herself may preserve in health under her wings the benevolent King Maximilian, who is so kind to his people, and at the present moment is among the poisoned and spotted Italians in Lyguria,

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so that he may, free from the disease, receive the imperial honours. May the kind king happily preserve his diadem and crown from this, (the king), who is a father worthy of all honours, whom all of us Christians should follow unanimously, so that the pagans would see us as the people of God. And oh ! Ye Italians ! before all things have a care for our kind and gentle king, so that the dire disease may not throw you down and kill you ! The dies have been cast quickly. Rhamnusia, who is called Luck by the poets, is playing with the world and is angry with us. O thou German and brotherly virtue and ye living hearts, do not act foolishly, do not leave to others the reins, the power, and the wealth ! It means a lot to the members, when the Head has the rule of the whole world, which (head) all peoples should fear and all countries alone should serve, as the generous victorious Emperor Maximilian, who is a light of battle and also a lover of peace. Indeed, I would rather lie under the feet of this prince, than carry the sceptre to a foreigner. O ye dear burghers, I beg, let us be humble members to the head ; thus the paternal ornament will stay with us for a long time. We follow in the footsteps of the excellent souls of great men and the shadows of our parents, for it is not seeming that we should fall out of the lineage of those who by their virtue, sweat, and battles took over the Roman Empire and the three-fold power of the sceptre for the war-like Germans. Therefore, O thou eternal God and thou bearer of God, Mary, we beg of you that the German lands may keep forever their previous honour and their strong name !

The foreword in this treatise was made and put together by Master Joseph Grünpeck von Burckhausen to the Carmina of Sebastian Brannndt, honourable doctor of both laws, which (the Carmina) are set forth with short and subtle words.

As I think upon the great misery, sorrow, fear, and need which we feel daily, with which the Almighty Eternal God (even I admit it) punishes us every hour and every moment, I cannot hold back the tears. I find in the old histories and stories great plagues and punishments, which were laid upon the human race on account of their sins—great pestilences, shedding of blood and

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famines ; but they are indeed not to be compared with that which fills the present time, in which we are now living, for the cruel pestilence, in like degree the awful famine and also the dreadful wars from which we are seldom exempt for more than five years. That which did not happen in the old days is now common in these years of grace. Above all these punishments there has arisen a previously unheard-of, unseen, unknown to all mortals, a dreadful stinking, pimply, and disgusting sickness with which people are being severely stricken, the like of which has never before appeared on earth. Also, no man has been found who has told the origin or cause of this sickness or plague, unless it be a punishment of God. The sins of man have multiplied so greatly before the Lord of all things, that even he cries down from the highest throne : " I repent that I created man ! " But even though one does not find anything written about it in the books of the doctors (for some think that it is Mentagora, some that it is Planta Noctis, some call it Scorra, and all those have their cause, and their difference from each other, and are almost alien to the sickness from which men are suffering now), every one who keeps an eye on these same suffering people, who are tortured in this way, can notice this ; that the sickness is looked upon more as a plague sent by God to humans, than as having come out of Nature. I believe, therefore, that a hidden cause of this sickness may be related, which comes out of the influence of the stars, which, according to my power, I will describe and substantiate by all conjunctions of the planets and the ten rotations of Saturn, which have taken place up until this present year, and I will begin at the first disposition of the firmament and will also not keep silent that this illness comes from the will of God as a punishment to mortals on account of sin. I will now begin to say from where all the plagues descend upon the world, and will afterwards finish up with that of the French Evil.

CHAPTER I

ABOUT THE PLAGUES OF MORTALS, WHETHER THEY COME NATURALLY OR FROM GOD

THE holy doctors say : just as there are three main sins, from which spring all other sins, so also are there

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three scourges, with which mortals are punished. The three sins are pride, avarice, and unchastity ; but the punishments are pestilence, blood-shed, and famine, with which the Almighty God in the old days subdued the folly and malice of men, and with which he also torments us to-day. Therefore it follows that the first and most frequent cause of these plagues comes out of the will of God on account of sin. Therefore, also does the pestilence now come so often and stays away seldom longer than ten years. Likewise, famine and war ; when wickedness is so great that it cries for revenge to the Lord on high, who speaks through the prophet Ezekiel in the twelfth chapter : “ I will preserve few men among them from the sword, famine, and pestilence, so that their wickedness may cry out among the peoples.” And again through Jeremiah in the twenty-ninth chapter : “ I will persecute them all with the sword, famine, and pestilence.” He speaks again through the prophet Ezekiel in the fifth chapter : “ Pestilence, blood, and famine will go through you, and I will introduce the sword through you.” And when the cause thus runs along, the stars effect nothing, as Jeremiah says in the tenth chapter : “ Ye shall not fear the signs of the heavens, which the pagans fear, for the Lord has sent the pestilence into Israel.” Then the other cause of these scourges, coming from God, is partly natural, partly it comes from the conjunction of the planets. The natural cause I can prove this way, for the body of man is made out of the uniting of the four elements, and because of that they can be transformed and changed at all times, either by exterior, either by interior happenings. But when the body changes, then their nature changes too ; therefore, comes war, likewise hunger, when great dryness reigns, and that happens as often as the two planets are joined, Saturn and Jupiter, in a hot and dry sign ; for thus the bodies of men are inflamed for war, so also comes unfertility of the earth, which is followed by famine. This is proved by Aristotle in his book about the nature and the attributes of the elements, when he says : “ fertility and unfertility happen through the changes of the stars into various signs over the seven parts of the earth.” But pestilence happens, when the air is poisoned, for the air is an element which easily changes and rots, and we are animals which breathe. Therefore

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the bad air, when it is drawn into the body by breathing, poisons its interior parts, and because some bodies are more fit than others, these latter die and the others do not. But how the French Evil comes, I will show further through the joining of the stars and I herewith beg the reader to read over this material with care, and if it is slightly strange to the common people, who are not versed in this art of the stars, still it will become easier if one reads about it often. Therefore, I pray you, not to throw it aside right away, for you will find use as well as delight in it.

CHAPTER II

ABOUT THE FIRST DISPOSITION OF THE SKY, ORDERED BY GOD TO RULE THE LOWER WORLD IN THE BEGINNING

It is the opinion of the doctors and of the wise and men experienced in the art of the stars, that the world was created by God in the time of the spring when night equalled day, and the sun enters in the Sign of the Ram. If one takes this as a start, then one can form the position of the firmament according to it, which was thus, according to the calculations of various astronomers, and which happened as they thought as follows: that Saturn, the first planet, stood in Aquarius, in his house, in the 21st degree of his rise: Jupiter the second planet stood in the Sign of Pisces, in the 28th degree of his rise; now comes Mars, the third, in Scorpio, in his house, in the 28th degree of his rise. The Sun, the fourth planet, stood in Aries, in the 19th degree of his rise; Venus, the fifth, stood in Taurus, in her own house, and in the 27th degree of her rise. Mercury stood in his own house, Gemini, in the 15th degree of his rise; the Moon stood in Taurus, in the 3rd degree of her rise. But the tail of the Dragon stood in the Hunter, in the 3rd degree of his rise; and the head of the Dragon stood in the Gemini, in the 3rd degree of his rise. Therefore, we have to keep in mind that since the Moon went through the head of the Dragon, she was the first to be joined to Mercury in the sign of the Gemini, and that was the first conjunction of the planets. After that she was joined to the other planets, until she came to the Sun which

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happened on the twenty-seventh day, or near that, after her creation. That was the formation of the firmament in the beginning of the world, according to the belief of the astronomers, out of which formation all conjunctions and joinings of the other planets follow. Therefore, one must know, as Albumasar and Halihabenragel write in the eighth book in the thirty-fifth chapter, that this sign of the beginning of the world has been found, namely, Aries, and that his planet had been the Sun ; but in the ascendancy or in the beginning it was Cancer, in which stood Jupiter. After those remarks one recognises also the beginning of the years, and I wanted to call attention to that so that one would realise the reason whereby I, with the help of God, want to show that this sickness, the French Evil, comes from the influence of the sky. Finally, I want also to say, how one can also describe another figure, in which the planets stand differently in the signs. There is, however, a small difference from this one, which has been described, for even the greatest joinings change according to every description. Therefore, we will stay by the first one, even though various astronomers explained the greatest joinings differently, which makes for great discord ; so that therefore the stories, which happened during such a conjunction, may not be attributed exactly to the same, still one may note the other conjunctions and the great orbs, about which I will write after this, which were between the greatest conjunctions, so that this article may not have been written and filled with figures in vain.

CHAPTER III

CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF YEARS, WHICH HAVE
PASSED FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD UNTIL
THIS YEAR 1496.

THE doctors are in discord in the calculations of the years from the beginning of the world until the birth of Christ, for they differ widely from one another in respect to the years, which some have long and others short : but for myself, I take simply the following teachers : Hieronymus, Josephus, Eusebius, Orosius, Bedas, and the seventy interpreters, whose figures differ a bit. But

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I find no other use and no other cause, than that they take a part for the whole ; if they take the years, which have not yet been fulfilled, for whole years. They do not count the months, days, minutes, thirds, and quarters. I have put together the same years with much care, and that is the computation according to Bedas, whom the Christian church follows ; and it does not differ as much from Alfonsus, as does Vincentius ; for Alfonsus counts from the Flood to the birth of Christ three thousand one hundred and one years, ten months, twelve days, and thirty minutes. After that, when one adds to that the other years from Christ, and from the beginning of the world to the Flood, then we have the years up to now. Though the heathen authors have not written anything about the number of years before the Flood, still we have the number of them from the Lord's revelation, and it is thus : from the beginning of the world to the Flood, two thousand two hundred and forty-two years passed, and that was the first age that lasted so long. After that, from the Flood to Abraham there were nine hundred and forty-two years, that was the other age. Again, from the birth of Abraham to the King David, nine hundred and forty years passed ; that was the third age of the world. Then, from David to the march out of Babylonia there passed four hundred and eighty-five years ; that was the fourth age of the world. And then from the return from Babylonia until Christ, there passed five hundred and ninety years and this was the fifth age of the world. Finally from Christ to these present years is the sixth age, whose number or end no one knows. According to what is said in the holy gospel, it is not meant for you, that you should know the time or the moment, which the heavenly Father has in His power. The seventh age will be the eternal blessedness in the heavenly Fatherland. And finally, I want every person to understand this, that we mean by *year* the Caesarian year that Julius Caesar set up for us in Egypt ; that same year has three hundred and sixty-five days and six hours. Now I will come to the great conjunctions of the planets, which always means strange things in the future of this world.

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CHAPTER IV

TELLS OF THE MANIFOLD CHANGES IN THE WORLD, WHICH
COME FROM THE GREAT CONJUNCTIONS OF THE PLANETS

THE Almighty God has given the stars the power to flow into the worldly creatures and to arrange and regulate all things ; therefore, it happens often that the big things of this world, changes and transformations and such, come from the constellations of the sky, because necessarily, as Aristotle writes, the lower world is subject to the upper, so that it may be governed by her ; which we also note, as the year is divided into four seasons, the spring, the summer, the fall, and the winter. Now comes a rise in the price of grain, now hunger and pestilence, now other reversals of realms and rules, which things all masters of the constellations say happen from the conjunction of the planets, and especially of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, because of their slow rotations. It is, however, necessary to know that the conjunctions of the planets are two-fold ; one, called the upper of the three uppermost planets, the other, the lower. According to that, the conjunction of the upper planet is four-fold ; the small, the large, the very largest and the middle-sized. The largest conjunction happens, when the three planets Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars join together, and when after that Saturn and Jupiter come together in the sign of the Ram. That happens every nine hundred and sixty years. It means strange things, as Messahala says, and on account of its slow movement, it announces changes of the kingdoms of the world, the appearance of various comets and other miracles in the air, or floods and earthquakes and famine. Then the large conjunction is that of governments, because out of their transformation from one sign into the other, from the damp into the dry, and from the cold into the warm, great things happen, and these are always occurring every two hundred and forty years. The middle-sized conjunction is Saturn and Mars, which always happens at the beginning of the sign of Cancer every thirty years. But the small conjunction is that of Saturn and Jupiter once in every sign, which happens every twenty years. To understand it thoroughly, it happens thus : Jupiter finishes his course in twelve years, and Saturn finishes his in twenty years.

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Therefore, it happens that in twenty years they are joined in the ninth sign from that in which they were joined the time before ; after twenty years more they are joined in the fifth sign from that in which they were joined the first time ; and after another twenty years they are joined again in the first sign. This conjunction is called the large conjunction, which happens once in sixty years. In it, there comes the famine and abundance of all things, and the kings, lords, and other powerful men gather up great riches. And when they are joined three times in the same sign, so that they become another triplicity, then this is called the larger conjunction, which happens once in two hundred and forty years and it means new laws in various countries, and when the change happens in still another sign, that is called the greatest conjunction on account of Saturn, who rotates thirty-two times, and that happens once in nine hundred years or close to that, and guides the happenings, which I have mentioned before.

CHAPTER V

ABOUT THE GREAT CONJUNCTIONS OF PLANETS, WHICH
HAVE HAPPENED SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE
WORLD TO THE YEAR 1496.

ALTHOUGH it is difficult to place the greatest conjunctions of the planets correctly into the years of the world, if we follow the prescribed pattern of the sky, how the planets stood in their signs, according to the opinion of the general astronomers, then we may very well find the first conjunction ; not that it coincides absolutely with the cut and dried reckoning, but it approaches the truth. If we follow the astronomers, the first great conjunction of the two planets Saturn and Jupiter happened at the beginning of the sign of the Ram three hundred and twenty years after the beginning of the world, or near then ; that is proven from this, that sixteen small conjunctions took place, which always happen in twenty years. Through these there happened afterwards the aforementioned greatest conjunction of the two planets in the sixth degree of the sign of the Ram, because the sixteen conjunctions had as many as three hundred and

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twenty years, since each one happened twenty years apart. If one now adds three hundred and twenty years to nine hundred and sixty years, then it follows, that in the one thousand two hundred and eightieth year after the beginning of the world, there took place the other largest conjunction of the two planets in the sign of the Ram ; because, as has been said, this happens always every nine hundred and sixty years. So, if one adds to that number again nine hundred and sixty years, then comes the third greatest conjunction in the two thousand two hundred and fortieth year, and if one again adds nine hundred and sixty years, then occurs the fourth largest conjunction in the three thousand and two hundredth year after the beginning of the world. The fifth largest conjunction was four thousand and sixty years after the beginning of the world. The sixth largest conjunction was five thousand one hundred and twenty years after the beginning of the world. The seventh largest conjunction of the two planets Saturn and Jupiter was six thousand and eighty years after the beginning of the world, or seven hundred and thirty-five years after the birth of Christ. Therefore, there have been seven of the largest conjunctions of the two planets Saturn and Jupiter since the beginning of the world. The eighth will take place, if God is willing, in the seven thousand and fortieth year. Although the general changes and the great miracles always come during the largest conjunctions, and have always done so, as one finds in all histories, and with which are filled all books, which have been written from the beginning of the world up to this time about the occurrences which have taken place, still, stranger things have always happened during the times of the large conjunctions of the two planets Saturn and Jupiter. Those same stories and miraculous works I will take up with the help of God in the great *Pronosticum* and I will leave them out here, for shortness' sake. It is enough to know something about the origin, from which we may prove that this French Evil comes from the influence of the heavens. And although various experienced astronomers say that they have reckoned correctly, after the tables of Alfonsus, several of the largest conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter to occur in the sign of the Ram (which happened about a hundred years before or after the times of the described conjunctions), these same are

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not the largest conjunctions. So we will follow along to a finish the way which we have begun.

CHAPTER VI

TELLS ABOUT THE LARGER CONJUNCTIONS OF THE PLANETS,
AND OF THE TEN ROTATIONS OF SATURN

I HAVE said enough of the largest conjunctions of the two planets Saturn and Jupiter, which indicates a common change in the whole world because of their slow rotation, which happens in nine hundred years. Now I will come to the large ones, which always happen in two hundred and forty years, and indicate changes in various kingdoms. Therefore it is necessary to know that always under the two largest conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter, there are at the very least three large conjunctions, which always come in two hundred and forty years, therefore, there are very strange stories connected with those times. Also, there happen under the two large conjunctions of the two planets Saturn and Jupiter, which happen in two hundred and forty years, at the very least three large conjunctions every sixty years, and these indicate power and growing of riches of the powerful lords. Also there happen always two conjunctions of Saturn and Mars, which take place every thirty years and indicate famine and war, under the two conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter every sixty years. It is also necessary to know that under two of the largest conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter, there is at least one rotation of the eighth sky every six hundred and forty years, and also more rotation of the large discs in three hundred and sixty years. In addition to that, there are ten rotations of Saturn, about which Albumasur says, they all have a great significance in the changes of the countries and of the laws, and also have other great influence according to the teachings of the great astronomers, which things are followed by pestilence, death, and other great sicknesses. How the French Evil comes naturally out of the influence of the sky, I want to prove, as follows hereafter, from the large conjunctions of the planets and the ten rotations of Saturn, if you have understood from the first chapter, how the pestilence

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comes naturally from the influence of the stars. However, I want to admonish people, that I do not ascribe anything to necessity, but to natural causes and to inclination, which the free will can withstand with the help of God. The almighty power of God alone, with the command of the will, may withstand the inclination which He has sent with other causes that are noticeable in natural ways.

CHAPTER VII

ABOUT THE FIRST CAUSE OF THE FRENCH EVIL, WHICH
COMES FROM THE CONJUNCTION OF THE TWO PLANETS,
SATURN AND JUPITER.

SINCE I want to get to the bottom of this terrible and cruel sickness, which one calls the French Evil, and since no doctor of medicine can discover the causes of this illness, I turn to the astronomers and to the teachers of the art of the stars. And as I look over all their books industriously and measure all the conjunctions from the beginning of the world to this present year, I find in the tables of Alfonsus, a large conjunction and joinings together of the two planets Saturn and Jupiter, which appeared in the year 1484, on the 25th day of November, six hours and four minutes after noon when the sign which is called Cancer had risen into the part of the sky which looks down on us. And the joining happened in the 23rd degree, in the forty-third minute of the sign of the Scorpion, which is one of the houses of Mars, the unlucky planet who has his freedom when in there. And, according to this reckoning, the evil Saturn, in the height of his circle, along about midnight, has suppressed the benevolent Jupiter, and Mars is a lord of this conjunction, and is also in his royal house and at his height, therefore Saturn controls all opportunities of this conjunction of the two planets Saturn and Jupiter. After that, in the next year of 1485, on the 25th day of March, there came a cruel and fearful eclipse of the sun, and her influence fell under the domination of the large conjunction and that made her effect bad. And, again, there was another conjunction of Saturn and Mars, in the 9th degree of the Scorpion, on the last day of Novem-

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ber, in the unwelcome hour of the lighting of the moon, which increases the cruelty of the other constellations. The large conjunction and the eclipse had not finished their effects, when there came the conjunction of the triplicity, in which the planets were joined together. The afore-mentioned conjunction and eclipse were followed by great trouble, such as war and pestilence which still holds sway in all lands, and famine, which also does not come to an end, and many other great evils, which things have all taken place, as every one can see. In addition to all this there came the cruel, unheard-of and unseen sickness, the French Evil, which also this aforementioned conjunction has brought hither, from France into Italy, and after that, into Germany; that happened thus, for it has been found that Jupiter, which is a hot and moist planet, rules over France. But life and strength are in warmth and in natural dampness, as the masters of natural science prove. Therefore, the French are fit by nature, but they fall more easily into such sicknesses, for their bodies are subject to greater harm than others, because they have more blood and more moisture and are more saturated, which moistness and saturation are more prone to rotting, and can sooner be broken up. After the benevolent Jupiter was suppressed by Saturn in this conjunction, and Mars is the Lord of this conjunction, those two planets break up the warmth and the natural moisture in man, therefore this moisture is the first materia of this sickness; for Saturn is cold and dry and rules over the melancholy, which he increases and makes and leads into the body, and spoils the good blood, and ruins also the complexion. Since Mars governs in this conjunction and is in his own house, he mixes in also his wickedness and increases the moist humor called cholera, which is the other element of the French Evil. These Humors or moistures come therefore so out of their workings and nature, that it becomes such a vile, stinking, and poisonous matter that it is not to be compared to leprosy, for leprosy, in comparison, is much more easily to be endured. The smell comes from the uncleanness of Saturn, which is a planet of uncleanness and stinks; therefore, melancholy appears in this sickness as one cause. Then the great heat comes from Mars, which is a planet of kindling, for the pox tortures people so, that many wish for death; there one



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sees the other cause, that the sickness comes not only from the evil moisture, melancholy, but also mixes with melancholy which comes from the inflamed humor called cholera. The third cause appears in the broken-up blood, for black, stinking blood runs out. Nature works to drive out these matters, and beats them down to the genital region or the parts of shame ; for the sign of Scorpio in which the conjunction took place, has power over the parts of shame. But it cannot be completely driven away through these, therefore it breaks out in other places. After that the sickness flew over to Italy, and from there to Germany, for Germany is subject to the planet Mars. Now it is getting into England and other places, which are subject to Saturn. Finally, it is to be known, that on the whole, all the people who, at their birth, had Jupiter as a ruling planet, are more subject to this French Evil ; also all those, at whose birth the sign, which rose during the oft-mentioned conjunction, was rising ; also those, at whose birth there was the eclipse, are more prone to get this sickness.

CHAPTER VIII

ABOUT THE OTHER CAUSE OF THE FRENCH EVIL WHICH
COMES OUT OF THE TENTH ROTATION OF SATURN,
THE PLANET.

SINCE not only the large conjunctions of the planets have an influence on the marvellous happenings in this world, but also the tenth rotation of Saturn, therefore I will say a little bit about that. It is necessary to know that the rotation of Saturn is thus—when he begins at one point and goes all the way around and arrives again in the same spot, and that happens in thirty years ; when he rotates ten times, then that is called the ten rotations of Saturn, and that happens in three hundred years. At the time when the tenth rotation of Saturn is accomplished, there happen great changes in the kingdoms and in the laws, also widespread deaths and other great evils, and that takes place after the height of the tenth rotation, and especially when it falls to Saturn to change into the movable signs, such as into the Ram, the Cancer, the Scales, and into Capricorn. When the

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ten rotations of Saturn were accomplished in the time of Darius, the king of Persia, there appeared the great Alexander and the ruin of the kingdom of Persia. And after that, when the next ten rotations were finished, there came into this world, Jesus, the son of Mary, and he changed the Jewish laws. And when again a tenth rotation had passed, there arose another sect between the Nazarenes and the Heathens. And again after another tenth rotation if one reckons for each one three hundred years, Mahomet came with his accursed laws. And again after another tenth rotation of Saturn, which took place eight hundred and eighty-nine years after the birth of Christ, under the Pope Formosus, there was a great division of the Christian churches. At that time also there came out of Scythia the Hungarian peoples, one hundred and twenty tribes strong, and occupied the land of Hungary. Again, after that, when ten rotations of Saturn were finished, in the year one thousand one hundred and eighty-nine, the Pope by the name of Innocence the Third, did many good works. At the time there was a great famine ; which was followed by much death. And again, after ten rotations of Saturn, which were finished in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-nine, there came the great evils, at first the great famine, which lasted for well seven years and has not finished yet, after that the cruel pestilence, which also still rules, and the great war with the King of France. Over and above all these ills, there now comes the fearfully cruel sickness, and the afore-mentioned French Evil. Therefore is this tenth rotation of Saturn a cause of the sickness ; for never has one come about that it did not bring something great in its wake. The other cause is this : famine was common to the whole world due to the conjunction and general eclipse of the sun, which I have related in the seventh chapter ; but in one country more than in another because of their influence, which was greater over German lands due to the rule of the planet Mars in that same conjunction, since Mars is master of German destiny, whom this rotation of Saturn also aids towards evils and increases the same ; therefore, there follow the more peculiar effects. After famine great sickness is always apt to come, because when people are lacking in food-stuffs and use other edible things which are not fitted to their natures. Then the

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natural warmth and moistures are prevented and just as the same repulsive food is not digested, but kept until it rots ; so is that same bad matter which has been collected driven away by nature, but if she is too sick, it kills the person. All that takes place, however, is known to the doctors and there is no necessity of telling it here. Therefore enough has been said about these causes.

CHAPTER IX

ABOUT MEDICINES FOR THIS CRUEL AND FEARFUL SICKNESS

IT is to be known that there are three particular medicines against this cruel sickness, which one calls the French Evil, the Wild Warts, if one speaks of the remedies of nature ; for the remedy above nature, which comes down from above is that the person be in the grace of God and cleanse himself by confession and penance, as we read in the book of wisdom in the sixteenth chapter ; neither the herb Zeduria or Tormentilla nor the plaster Malagnia has healed them. And again, David in the psalm ; he left his words and made them healthy again. Therefore, speaking of natural remedies, there are three ; the first is flight, that every one should flee from those people who have this sickness, for it goes from one person to the other, and every one should keep himself in a good fresh place, where those same people have not been or have not lived. Also they should avoid their clothes and in fact all things which they have used. Also, every one should keep away from large gatherings, in case one among those present might be poisoned. And that in general is what is meant by flight. But, in particular, one should flee from the following things : In the first place, a public bath, into which many different people come. Next, one should abstain from much eating and drinking. Thirdly, if one should find himself being depressed, he must be jolly and not think about the sickness, because even imagination and thinking about it may bring on the sickness. Fourth, every one should always make a good smell in his room or living quarters with myrrh or white incense, and at least three or four times a week, when he goes to bed he should lay on the coals cranberries or juniper-berries or dried vermifuge, also Baccus Lauri, and should retain the smoke with

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windows shut and inhale it. Fifth, food should be cooked with vinegar or mixed with it. Sixth, one should keep away from women, because this sickness is easily aroused by that. Seventh, one should avoid beer.

CHAPTER X

ABOUT THE CLEANSING OF THE BODY AT THIS TIME

THE other rule is, that one should faithfully cleanse one's body, and that happens in two ways. First, by a correct rule of living. Second, by a thorough cleaning. According to the first, one should have a care to avoid the following things, such as fish and sweet fruits, also fat meats such as pigs, lamb, capons, and water-fowls. But these are the things one should use during this time : young chickens, veals, hares, young goats, doves, birds of the crane family, pheasants, and mountain birds. And let this meat be prepared with vinegar and herbs or with the juice of lemons, pomegranates, or Margran apples. A good vinegar is more to be recommended at this time than other acid things, which do not keep away rottenness from the body as much, also do not quell the inflammation of the moisture as much as vinegar. Meat is also better roasted than boiled. One should keep away from all confections made of honey. The drink should be a wine, mixed with water, which is not sweet ; or a cold water mixed with vinegar or herbs. Then in the second place, the cleansing of the body takes place by an evacuation or driving out of the bad moistures ; and you should know that various medicines, which one gives at this time, drive out the evil vapours ; others change the body and preserve it from all rottenness and from the poison. Things that drive out the vapours are blood-letting and purgatives ; therefore, you ought to know that hot and damp bodies, and especially the young ones, should often be bled more or less, for they are full and have much blood, and are more ready for decay. After that, they should often take purgatives in the form of pills, which are prescribed by doctors. But others who do not belong to this category, about which I just told, should not be bled ; but each day, and especially from the third day to the third day, they should be

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cleansed by these same pills, for they keep the good moistures and drive out the evil ones.

Also, in the morning, when one rises, or if one has slept during the day, one should wash out the mouth with cold water, mixed with vinegar, and one should pour rosewater with a little vinegar or camphor into the nostrils. Finally, it is well that one should rub the whole body in the morning, when one wants to get up, and especially the back and the arms. After that, when one has arisen and has expelled the superfluous matter, one should comb one's hair often with a comb. This is a good short rule for this time of evil sickness. For further advice one may ask the worthy doctors, and before all things one should follow the advice of the highest doctor, Jesus Christ, who can free us from all sicknesses ; let us therefore ask the Virgin Mother, Mary, that she be our intermediary with her dear child, who are both blessed eternally and forever, Amen.

GOD BE PRAISED.

Here ends the little book, written by Master Joseph Grünpeck von Burckhausen for the praise and honour of the worthy and wise council of the praise-worthy city of Augsburg, about some verses of the highly learned Sebastian Brannndt, doctor of both laws, about the Wild Warts ; and if the same Latin verses have not been translated into German word for word, and also several have been changed—every one may decide for himself, why that has happened.

Printed in the Imperial city of Augsburg, by Hans Schawr and finished on the Saturday before the day of St. Thomas, The Apostle, 1496 years after the birth of Christ.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JOSEPH GRÜNPECK (also spelled Grunpeck, Grünbeck, and Grunpeckh) was born about 1470 at Burghausen, on the Salzach, and went first to school there. He showed marked ability at letters, and as early as 1496 he was stimulated by the medical poems of Sebastian Brant to begin his writing on the subject of the venereal epidemic. In the same year he wrote his "Pronosticum," and after that two comedies, which were promptly produced as part of community festivals with marked success. In 1498 he travelled south, saw Rome, and visited a German nobleman then living in Etruria. There were many German soldiers and officers in Italy at that time as part of the then reigning Kaiser Maximilian's campaign forces, and among these as

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well as among the Italian troops, he had an excellent opportunity to observe and study syphilis at first hand in the infected men. From Italy he went with a group of merchants to Hungary and then to Poland. He returned to Germany in 1499 and became acquainted with the Kaiser and was employed as his private secretary. He lived at Linz in 1501 with the Kaiser and Kaiserin, and there became celebrated as the producer and director of court pageants and plays. That same year, while accompanying the Kaiser on a journey, Grünpeck himself became infected with syphilis in Augsburg while staying at an inn. He was acutely ill at first and was a very sick man for two years. In 1503 or 1504, after a long convalescence at his birthplace, Burghausen, he went back to his old post with the royal family and undertook a program of literary activity. He is known to have continued thus until the death of Kaiser Maximilian in 1519. Grünpeck was not a physician, on account of which fact his writings were often discredited as being of any medical value, but in his signatures he refers to himself as *Magister* and *Priest* in early documents, and in his later writings he avails himself of the use of the title *Doctor*, which may have been an honorary degree. Besides poems and plays he wrote generally on the humanities, on medicine according to the scientific tradition of his day, with especial interests in religion and astrology. He enjoyed the art of translating and wrote in Latin and in German, employing both tongues with a ponderous, lengthy style. After 1519, Grünpeck is believed to have moved to Nürnberg and to have reached a ripe old age there, though the date of his death has never been accurately determined. So far as is known, no portrait of him has ever been found.

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